

Tom Scripps wins support for socialist anti-war campaign in Holborn and St Pancras, London

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party's (SEP) campaign for Tom Scripps in the London constituency of Holborn and St Pancras is challenging Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer, the incumbent MP, on a socialist and anti-war platform.

Teams on Camden Town High Street, in Kentish Town, and at workplaces including Royal Mail offices and hospitals, have distributed thousands of copies of the SEP's manifesto and sold literature. Popular titles include David North's, *The Logic of Zionism: From Nationalist Myth to the Gaza Genocide*.

In Kentish Town, **Andre**, an opponent of Israel's assault on Gaza and the war in Ukraine, said of the snap general election called by Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, "I feel like we have a poor choice, in the sense that we only have two parties, mainly because of the first-past-the-post system, meaning we only have a really limited choice and they almost seem the same."

Asked about Starmer's support for the genocide in Gaza, Andre said, "I think it's shameful. He should be a human rights lawyer, but he's not actually defending human rights. He says vague things like 'We need to see how it all goes', 'the courts need to make a decision', but then he made a decision and openly talked about the war in Ukraine. What's happening in Gaza is genocide. You don't need to have a PhD or even go to university, every common person can see what's going on is genocide. Children are being bombed, burned."

Andre lived for a time in Israel and had seen with his own eyes that it was an apartheid state.

On the war in Ukraine, he said, "NATO talks about being a defensive alliance, but are they? I think the West creates this narrative that Russia is doing all this to Ukraine just because they're irrational, because they are scared of democracy. No: they are doing all this because they feel they are being provoked. The West is provoking what is happening in Ukraine. Imagine if Russia put bombs and things on the border with Mexico, the US would freak out. That's exactly what's actually happening to Russia. It doesn't mean that what Russia's doing is right, but it's certainly not right what the West is doing, especially the US."

Sociology student **Leah** told campaigners in Camden, "It once felt like the only way to get things done was to vote Labour or Tory. It's got to the point where the Tories have ruined this country so much that the first step is getting them out. But then we've got to start thinking productively.

"The back of your leaflet says it's an international party. Yes, it's not just workers in this country being hit, it's workers all around the world.

"The means of production and wealth is hoarded in such a tiny sector. Apparently the government don't know how to empathise with other people. We're promoting inequality and scrapping diversity. A world without diversity is only going to create a fascist state.

"The new party [Reform UK] is promoting a patriotic curriculum. We're rewriting history. People who are proud of our history are crazy. Proud of colonialism! We shouldn't be proud of what's been done. That should be a harrowing story, and what we're doing now in Gaza should make us stop and think."

Leah's friend **Khadijah**, who is going to study politics after A levels, said, "I don't think that

governments should have the power to dictate when wars should happen and impose them on us. And they're going to war against a country that has so much power like Russia.

"When North Korea has nuclear weapons, there's such a strong negative reaction," said Leah. "Now this country's doing that, why are we not saying the same? If we get rid of nuclear arms we're going to be a lot safer.

"We had the Cold War a couple of decades ago, that should be warning enough. Why aren't we being educated about this?"

"After China they're going to start on Africa. We're already in trouble. Look at Congo. A man set himself on fire there, just so he could tell people 'help, this country is going under'.

"America is like a third world country with a Gucci belt. On the inside it's a mess. And the money doesn't just disappear, it goes to someone. Are we going to learn from history?"

Julena, a Latvian-born Russian, said, "I like your campaign because I don't agree with the Gaza genocide and Israel is wrong. I understand what happened before but I think it's wrong to respond by killing civilians, women and children.

"America is making war on the world. We need a strong campaign that understands what is happening and tries to stop it. We are one stop away from a big war and we need to stop this and start talking. We don't have a lot of time.

"I want to say to people in Latvia they should not be happy about what is happening. Because this will lead to closing factories and lowering wages. The big salaries will only go to the rich people, the ones nearest the government.

"I'm Russian but Latvian born and I can't say my nationality, and it's not right."

Julena said of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange [before he was freed from the UK's Belmarsh Prison after agreeing to a plea bargain], "I want him to be freed. He should be free and should not be in prison for telling the truth. This is a very bad situation for journalists. I want a world without war and that all people can say what they think."

A resident from Argentina whose father was a socialist said, "The right-wing gets success because when the left are in power they don't do anything. We

need a real left."

In Kentish Town, one resident told the team, "I'm totally against Starmer, I've been campaigning against people like him all my life. You had fascism in the last century and you still have it now."

Another said, "I don't agree with Starmer pretending to stand with the oppressed, when he refuses to condemn what Israel is doing in Gaza.

"I don't believe any of this 'democracy', 'self-determination' stuff in Ukraine. NATO will support any dictator if it fits their interests. They destroyed Libya, not because Gaddafi was a dictator but because he wanted to stop using the dollar and Euro for oil payments."

Another resident said, "With Labour, you look at what they say on the National Health Service, on deporting people, they're no different to the Tories. The Tories say something on migration, and Starmer just says 'yes'. I know lots of people who came to this country and worked 10 years in the NHS, and are now leaving.

"I voted for you in 2019, I think I will be joining the Socialist Equality Party soon."

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